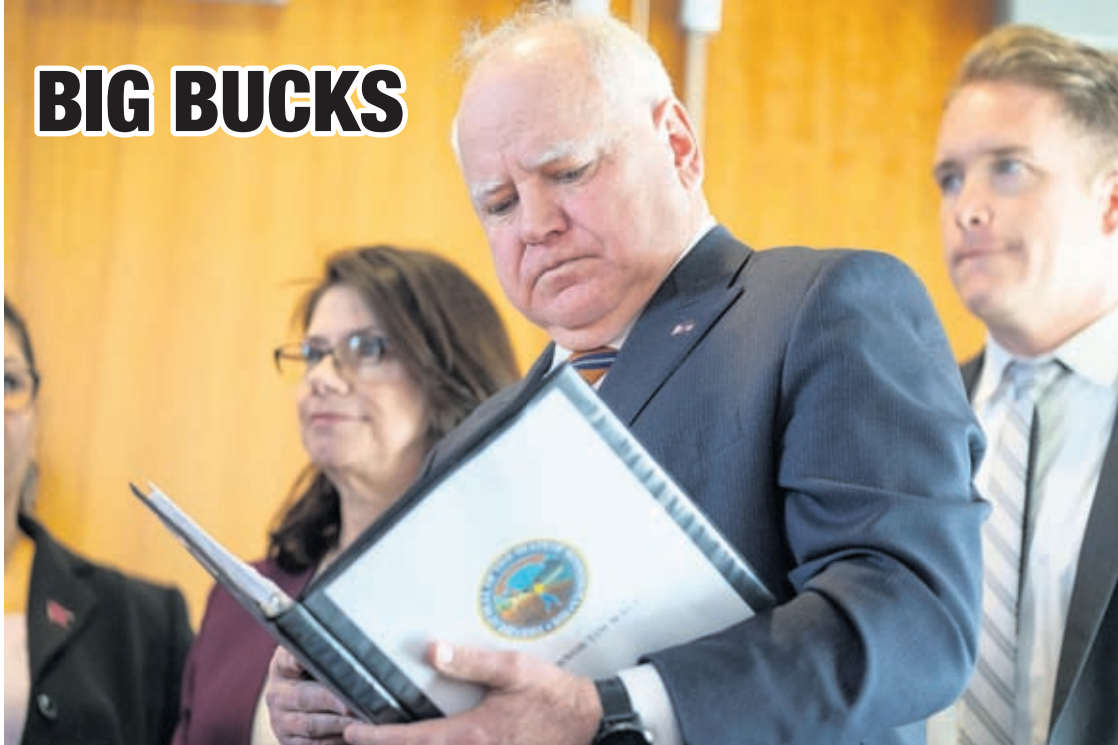




## BIG BUCKS



Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz reviews notes before speaking about the state's budget Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2022, at the Minnesota Department of Revenue in St. Paul, Minn.

Associated Press

## States banking big bucks as Fed attempts to fight inflation

By DAVID A. LIEB  
Associated Press

**JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP)** — State governments emerging from the coronavirus pandemic built historic cash surpluses as inflation in prices and wages drove up sales and income tax collections. Now many states are reaping another reward: banking millions of dollars off those surpluses as the Federal Reserve fights in-

flation with higher interest rates. "We're catching both ends of it," said Missouri Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick, a Republican. First, "we received a lot of extra money," he said. "Now, nominally, we're benefiting from the increase in interest rates from the Fed."

Continued on Page 4

## Landfill Parkietenbos closes



## University of Aruba and Utrecht School for Administration and Organization collaborate on research project in Aruba



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# Supreme Court keeps immigration limits in place indefinitely



A Venezuelan migrant warms her hands over a campfire outside her makeshift tent refusing to be relocated to a refugee shelter, in Matamoros, Mexico, Friday, Dec. 23, 2022. Associated Press

By **REBECCA SANTANA and ELLIOT SPAGAT**  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Supreme Court is keeping pandemic-era limits on immigration in place indefinitely, dashing hopes of immigration advocates who had been anticipating their end this week.

In a ruling Tuesday, the Supreme Court extended a temporary stay that Chief Justice John Roberts issued last week.

Under the court's order, the case will be argued in February and the stay will be maintained until the justices decide the case.

The limits were put in place under then-President Donald Trump at the beginning of the pandemic. Under the restrictions, officials have expelled asylum-seekers inside the United States 2.5 million times and turned away most people who requested asylum at the border on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The restrictions are often referred to as Title 42 in reference to a 1944 public health law. "We are deeply disappointed for all the desperate asylum seekers who will continue to suffer because of Title 42, but we will continue fighting to eventually end the policy," said Lee Gelernt, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union which had been arguing to end Title 42's use. Immigration advocates sued to end the use of Title 42, saying the policy goes against American and international obligations to people fleeing to the U.S. to escape persecution. They've also argued that the policy is outdated as coronavirus treatments improve. A federal judge sided with them in November and set a Dec. 21 deadline to end the policy. Conservative-leaning states appealed to the Su-

preme Court, warning that an increase in migration would take a toll on public services and cause an "unprecedented calamity" that they said the federal government had no plan to deal with. Roberts, who handles emergency matters that come from federal courts in the nation's capital, issued a stay to give the court time to more fully consider both sides' arguments. The federal government asked the Supreme Court to reject the states' effort while also acknowledging that ending the restrictions abruptly would likely lead to "disruption and a temporary increase in unlawful border crossings." The Supreme Court's decision comes as thousands of migrants have gathered on the Mexican side of the border, filling shelters and worrying advocates who are scrambling to figure out how to care for them.

The precise issue before the court is a complicated, largely procedural question of whether the states should be allowed to intervene in the lawsuit, which had pitted advocates for the migrants against the federal government. A similar group of states won a lower court order in a different court district preventing the end of the restrictions after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced in April that it was ending use of the policy.

Until the judge's November order in the advocates' lawsuit, the states had not sought to take part in that case. But they say that the administration has essentially abandoned its defense of the Title 42 policy and they should be able to step in. The administration has appealed the ruling, though it has not tried to keep Title 42 in place while the legal case plays out. □

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# Navy to name ship after Marine battles in Fallujah, Iraq

By LOLITA C. BALDOR

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Navy's next amphibious assault ship will be named after the city of Fallujah, which saw some of the bloodiest battles in the Iraq war when U.S. Marines fought al-Qaida extremists in deadly house-to-house combat.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said the USS Fallujah will commemorate what have become known as the "First and Second Battles of Fallujah," following the tradition of naming the assault ships after Marine Corps battles or other early sailing ships and aircraft carriers.

Located about 45 miles (65 kilometers) from Baghdad, the city became the base for an anti-government Sunni insurgency after the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 toppled Saddam Hussein.

The first battle of Fallujah was triggered by increasing violence in the city including the deaths of five U.S. soldiers hit by a roadside bomb, and four security contractors working for Blackwater USA.

The contractors were killed and their bodies set on fire.

Two of the corpses were hung from a bridge, and photos of the carnage were distributed to media. In response, Marines battled for days to get control of the city, and in a turning point, a Marine vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade fired from a mosque, wounding five Marines.

U.S. forces converged on the mosque and eventually fired a Hellfire missile at the base of its minaret, and an F-16 fighter jet dropped a 500-pound bomb, killing dozens and fueling anti-American sentiment. Within a month, however, U.S. forces withdrew from Fallujah and turned control over to local Iraqi security forces. □



U.S. Army troops clear rolls of razor wire from the main entrance to Fallujah, Iraq, April 30, 2004. Associated Press

## Feds: Vanishing right whale must remain on endangered list

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

**PORTLAND, Maine (AP)** — The fading North Atlantic right whale will remain protected under the Endangered Species Act, and the species requires a series of protective steps to stave off extinction, federal authorities said Tuesday.

The whales number only about 340 and they have declined in population in recent years. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released a review of the whale's status on Tuesday that said the whale "is continuing to decline and has not met many of the recovery criteria outlined" in its recovery plan. □



A North Atlantic right whale feeds on the surface of Cape Cod bay off the coast of Plymouth, Mass., March 28, 2018.

Associated Press

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# States banking big bucks as Fed attempts to fight inflation

Continued from Front

Missouri is hardly alone. States ranging from Democratic-led Massachusetts to Republican-led Texas as well as politically divided Minnesota all are sitting on large surpluses that are swelling even further thanks to favorable interest rates on investments.

As legislatures prepare for their 2023 sessions, governors and lawmakers are proposing to tap into those surpluses to cover tax cuts and greater spending on priorities such as infrastructure and education. Though most states can afford it, financial experts are nonetheless urging caution because of concerns the U.S. could slip into a recession.

"Some of this is what I call a sugar high," said Phil Dean, chief economist and public finance researcher at the University of Utah's Gardner Policy Institute. "The growth rates are definitely not sustainable."

California could be a harbinger of economic trends. After projecting an unprecedented \$97 billion surplus just seven months ago, state officials are now forecasting a roughly \$25 billion deficit in the next budget. California imposes higher taxes on the wealthy than most states, leading to pendulum-type swings in tax revenues as the stock market rises and falls.

State budgeters have labored through abnormally uncertain times since the coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020. As governors ordered shutdowns to try to slow the spread of the virus, layoffs skyrocketed and states braced for huge revenue losses. But federal relief payments put spending money in people's pockets, labor markets rebounded and the deep downturn was short-lived.

State tax revenues surged well beyond expectations. After back-to-back years of double-digit percentage growth in revenues, states ended their 2022 fiscal years with a record cash balance of nearly \$343 billion, according to the Na-



**Missouri Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick displays a \$1 bill signed by the former treasurer of the United States on Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022, at his Capitol office in Jefferson City, Mo.**

Associated Press

tional Association of State Budget Officers.

"Budgets are really strong — historically strong," Tim Storey, CEO of the National Conference of State Legislatures, said as he previewed the upcoming legislative sessions.

Large surpluses put states in a position to benefit as the Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate seven times this past year, making many loans more expensive in an attempt to slow spending and fight inflation.

Texas had projected a \$27 billion surplus for its current budget, boosted by strong sales taxes and energy revenues. That's likely to rise to more than \$30 billion when a revised revenue estimate is released in January, said Tom Currah, associate deputy comptroller for fiscal matters. That's a larger surplus than the annual general fund expenditures of 40 other states.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott promised during his reelection campaign that half the surplus would go toward property tax relief. Surging tax revenue in Massachusetts this year triggered a seldom-used state law requiring \$2.9 billion to

be returned to taxpayers. Large cash balances allowed the state to collect nearly \$57 million of interest in October alone — six times the amount earned during the entire 2021 fiscal year. Minnesota is projecting a record \$17.6 billion surplus for the next budget. A strong economy, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, pushed individual income, sales and corporate tax revenues higher than originally projected. Political gridlock contributed to the swollen coffers, as the Republican-controlled Senate and Democratic-led House couldn't agree on how to use all the extra money.

Thanks to higher interest rates on the huge surplus, Minnesota expects investment earnings of \$428 million this fiscal year — a whopping 1,427% increase over a prior estimate.

Democrats who were victorious in the fall elections will hold full control of Minnesota government in 2023. Gov. Tim Walz said the surplus could be used to provide tax rebates, increase investments in education, modernize infrastructure and add charging stations

for electric vehicles.

"We can do all of these things. This isn't a choice of either-or," Walz said.

Virginia finance officials expect the nation to fall into a recession in 2023, depressing the state's tax revenues. Yet the state has so much extra money that Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin recently proposed an additional \$1 billion in tax cuts and \$2.6 billion in spending on education, economic development, public safety, behavioral health and the environment.

"Our state government's financial condition has never been stronger," Youngkin said. Citing a large surplus, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson called lawmakers into a special fall session to pass what he described as "the largest tax cut in the state's history." The first rung of the eventual \$760 million income tax cut takes effect in January. Yet Missouri still expects to finish its 2023 fiscal year with a surplus, leaving money to potentially spend on things such as teacher pay raises.

In the first five months of its fiscal year, Missouri already has earned \$116 million on its investments — nearly doubling the earnings of

the entire previous year. But Fitzpatrick, the treasurer, advises caution for policymakers.

"Even though we're making a lot of money, inflation is outpacing what we're able to make on our money," said Fitzpatrick, who will take office as the elected state auditor on Jan. 9. He added: "We need to be careful not to commit the state to a lot of ongoing new expenditures."

Pennsylvania's treasury is projected to rake in \$275 million of interest this fiscal year — 13 times the average amount over the past five years. Though comprising just a fraction of the state's overall budget, the interest earnings would be large enough to run any of the state's Cabinet agencies for a full year, except for education, human services and corrections.

Republican Treasurer Stacy Garrity recommended that budget writers put the extra cash into reserve, pointing out that an independent fiscal agency projects a billion-dollar-plus deficit for the 2023-24 budget year.

"We know that a fiscal cliff is looming, and it's crucial that the Commonwealth prepare as much as possible," Garrity's office said. Some other states also are forecasting leaner times.

Under a recently revised revenue forecast, Oregon expects to reap \$190 million of interest during the current budget cycle — almost double the amount that had been projected just three months earlier. The state expects a \$4 billion surplus this year. But state fiscal analysts also expect a mild recession in 2023 that could help flip the surplus into a \$560 million budget deficit during the next two years.

"The sharp rise in interest rates this year is akin to taking one's foot off the gas and slamming on the brakes. The car will shake, skid and even fishtail," said a report by Oregon's Office of Economic Analysis. "The ultimate question is does it end up in the ditch or is the driver able to pull out of it?" □



# Israeli doctors reject Netanyahu allies' anti-LGBTQ remarks

By ISAAC SCHARF and ILAN BEN ZION

Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Israel's largest medical center and health care workers from hospitals around the country have spoken out against remarks by allies of Benjamin Netanyahu calling for a law to allow discrimination against LGBTQ people in hospitals and businesses. It was part of a broader blowback against remarks made this week by Religious Zionism politicians calling for legal discrimination against LGBTQ people. Netanyahu's new government the most religious and hard-line in Israel's history is made up of ultra-Orthodox parties, an ultra-nationalist religious faction and his Likud party. It is to be sworn in on Thursday. Earlier this week, two Netanyahu allies from the ultranationalist Religious Zionism party said that their faction seeks to change an anti-discrimination law in a way that would permit businesses and doctors to deny service to LGBTQ people on the basis of religious belief. Orit Struck, a Religious Zion-



Israel's Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu arrives during the swearing-in ceremony for Israeli lawmakers at the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in Jerusalem, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022.

Associated Press

ist lawmaker, said her party seeks a change to the country's anti-discrimination law that would include allowing religious health care providers to refuse to treat LGBTQ patients "so long as there are enough other doctors to provide care." Sheba Medical Center released a video on Instagram of health care work-

ers from around the country on Monday saying "we treat everyone." Similar statements were made by doctors and administrators at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa and Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon. Netanyahu later rebuked Struck for her remarks, saying there would be no curtailment of LGBTQ rights under the new government.

The uproar could be a sign of what lies ahead for Netanyahu and his new government. His partners are seeking widespread changes that could alienate large swaths of the Israeli public, raise the risk of conflict with the Palestinians and put Israel on a collision course with some of its closest supporters, including the United States

and the American Jewish community.

Netanyahu has sought to portray himself as the responsible adult in the coalition and already issued a series of statements guaranteeing to protect the rights of LGBTQ people. But his partners hold great leverage because they support new legislation that could ultimately freeze or dismiss criminal charges against Netanyahu.

The long-time leader, who served 12 consecutive years before he was ousted last year, already has agreed to put a hard-line politician known for his anti-Arab views in charge of the national police force and put another hard-line settler leader in charge of West Bank settlement policies.

A third religious lawmaker who opposes LGBTQ rights has been given widespread authority over the national education system, and Netanyahu reportedly also has agreed to increase unpopular subsidies to ultra-Orthodox men who do not work or serve in the army. □

# Taiwan extends compulsory military service to 1 year

By HUIZHONG WU

Associated Press

**TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)** — Taiwan will extend its compulsory military service from four months to a year starting in 2024, President Tsai Ing-wen said Tuesday, as the self-ruled island faces China's military, diplomatic and trade pressure. Taiwan, which split from the mainland in 1949 during a civil war, is claimed by China. The decades-old threat of invasion by China has sharpened since Beijing cut off communications with Taiwan's government after the 2016 election of Tsai, who is seen as pro-independence. China's People's Liberation Army in particular has stepped up its military harassment, sending fighter planes and navy vessels

toward Taiwan on a near-daily basis in recent years. In response, the island's military actively tracks those movements, which often serves as training for its own military personnel. Those born before 2005 will continue to serve four months, but under a revamped training curriculum aimed at strengthening the island's reserves forces. "No one wants war," Tsai said. "This is true of Taiwan's government and people, and the global community, but peace does not come from the sky, and Taiwan is at the front lines of the expansion of authoritarianism." The White House welcomed the announcement on conscription reform, saying it underscores Taiwan's commitment to self-defense and strengthens

deterrence. "We will continue to assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability in line with our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act and our one-China policy," the White House said, adding it continues to oppose any unilateral changes in the status quo by either China or Taiwan. Beijing has often used military exercises to respond to moves it views as challenging its claims to sovereignty. In August, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, and China responded with the largest-scale military exercises it's held in decades, because it saw Pelosi's visit as an official diplomatic exchange. Although the U.S. is the island's largest unofficial ally,



New recruits practice thrusting with their bayonets at a military training center in Hsinchu County, northern Taiwan on April 22, 2013.

Associated Press

the two governments technically do not have diplomatic relations, as Washington does not formally recognize Taiwan as a sovereign state. The plan sets Taiwan up for increasing its defense capabilities but what remains to be seen is how well the Defense Ministry will carry out the reforms, said Arthur Zhin-Sheng Wang, a defense expert at Taiwan's

Central Police University. Taiwan's current 4-month-long military conscription requirement was widely panned by the public as being too short and not providing the training that professional soldiers actually need. The government had slashed it down from a year to four months in 2017 as it was transitioning the army into an all-volunteer corps. □



# Abduction, torture, rape: Conflict in Congo worsens, says UN

By **SAM MEDNICK**

**Associated Press**

**DAKAR, Senegal (AP)** —

The accounts are haunting. Abductions, torture, rapes. Scores of civilians including women and children have been killed by the M23 rebels in eastern Congo, according to a U.N. report.

In addition, the M23 rebels have forced children to be soldiers, according to the report by a panel of U.N. experts. The 21-page report based on interviews with more than 230 sources and visits to Rutshuru area of Congo's North Kivu province where the M23 have seized territory, is expected to be published this week.

Conflict has been simmering in eastern Congo for decades where more than 120 armed groups are fighting in the region, most for land and control of mines with valuable minerals, while some groups are trying to protect their communities.

The already volatile situation significantly deteriorated this year when the M23 resurfaced after being largely dormant for nearly a decade.

The M23 first rose to prominence 10 years ago when its fighters seized Goma, the largest city in Congo's east, which sits on the border with Rwanda. The group derives its name from a peace agreement signed on March 23, 2009 which



**Residents flee fighting between M23 rebels and Congolese forces near Kibumba, some 20 kms (12 miles) North of Goma, Democratic republic of Congo, on Oct. 29, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

called for the rebels to be integrated into the Congo army. The M23 accuse the government of not implementing the accord.

In late 2021 the reactivated M23 began killing civilians and capturing swaths of territory. M23 fighters raped and harassed women trying to farm family fields in areas controlled by the rebels, according to the report. The rebels accused civilians of spying for the Congolese army, said the report. They were often incarcerated and some were beaten to death, it said.

Not only are populations living under M23 subject to

abuse but they are forced to pay taxes, said the panel. At the Bunagana border crossing with Uganda, the rebels earned an average of \$27,000 a month making people carrying goods pay as they entered and left the country, said the UN. Two locals living under M23 who did not want to be named for fear of their safety, told The Associated Press they'd been forced to bring the rebels bags of beans, pay \$5 if they wanted to access their farms and take backroads if they want to leave the village for fear of reprisal.

The M23 did not respond to

questions about the allegations, but has previously dismissed it as propaganda. The violence by the rebels is part of an overall worsening of the crisis in eastern Congo, with fighting by armed groups intensifying and expanding in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces, said the report.

"The security and humanitarian situation in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces significantly deteriorated, despite the continuous enforcement of a state of siege over the past 18 months," and despite military operations by Congo's armed forces, Uganda's

military and the U.N. mission in Congo, said the report.

Adding to the difficult situation in eastern Congo, attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces believed to be linked with the Islamic State group are increasing, said the report. A nearly year-long joint operation by Uganda and Congo's armies "has not yet yielded the expected results of defeating or substantially weakening the ADF," it said. Since April ADF attacks have killed at least 370 civilians and abducted several hundred more, including a significant number of children, it said. The group also extended its area of operations to Goma and into the neighboring Ituri province.

The fighting is exacerbating eastern Congo's dire humanitarian crisis. Almost 6 million people are internally displaced in Congo with more than 450,000 displaced in North Kivu province since clashes escalated in February. Hundreds of thousands are facing extreme food insecurity and disease is spreading, say aid groups.

Cholera cases are spiking in Nyiragongo, a region hosting many of the displaced people in North Kivu, with more than 970 cases of the disease discovered in recent weeks, said Save The Children.

Efforts to stem the violence have yielded little results. □

## Spain scraps value-added tax on staple foods in aid package



**Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez listens to a question during a news conference to give a roundup of the economic and political situation over the past year in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

By **CIARÁN GILES**

**Associated Press**

**MADRID (AP)** — Spain on Tuesday announced a new series of measures including scrapping value-added tax on staple food, such as bread and milk, and is extending rent and eviction controls to help ease the economic crisis caused by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced the measures in an end-of-year speech. The government said it would also cut VAT on cooking oil and pasta from 10% to 5%. Fish and

meat products were excluded from the tax reductions. Sánchez said the three packages of aid measures passed since the start of the war in February would cost about 45 billion euros (\$48 billion), including 10 billion for the latest round of measures.

He said the aim was "to protect the middle and working classes given the rise in the cost of living, energy and food."

Although inflation and energy prices in Spain have fallen sharply in recent months, many Spaniards continue to suffer severely

from a crisis that started with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and was exacerbated by the war.

The government will maintain a cut in the tax on electricity, from 10% to 5%, for another six months as well issuing a new check of 200 euros for people earning less than 27,000 euros a year. He said the check would benefit 4.2 million homes.

The government extended the suspension of evictions of poor people, a measure that has been in effect since the COVID-19 pandemic. □



## Aruba conquers Muay Thai championship in Quito, Ecuador

ORANJESTAD – Last week, in a friendly atmosphere, minister of Sport, Mr. Endy Croes received a visit from Aruba athletes who fought in the international WWC Battle of the Grand Champion Warrior of the World Championship in Quito, Ecuador.

Present during this meeting was the president of Muay Thai in Aruba, Mrs. Rutmila Gonzalez, Stacy Hassel and Roony Boye. Some weeks ago, the athletes from



Aruba had a great performance in the South American Muay Thai championships, winning various titles and the champion belt.

Minister Endy Croes, in the name of the government of Aruba, awarded the athletes a commemorative medal as a token of gratitude and appreciation for their excellent performance. The minister of Sport congratulated them for their achievement for our country. □



## University of Aruba and Utrecht School for Administration and Organization collaborate on research project in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – On the 15th of December, students of the University of Aruba and the Utrecht School for Administration and Organization presented the results of their investigation on good governance done in Aruba.

The research project was collaboration between the Utrecht School for Administration and Organization and the University of Aruba and was organized by the Dutch students. During the months of November and December, groups of students carried out research on successful governance practices in Aruba, namely positive aspects of governance in Aruba. In the last two months they carried out interviews and observations in different sectors of public service. They analyzed what were the aspects that help different organizations be successful



in order to define the success factors and what can be learned from this for the future.

The goal of the investigation was to learn about the public service sector in Aruba and promote academic collaboration between the universities. The topic of research was chosen to empower and contribute to the community of Aruba. The collaboration offered the unique opportunity for students to develop and apply their knowledge and abilities to carry out research in a multicultural environment.

To conclude the research project, the students presented their results at the University of Aruba on the 15th of December. There were 10 groups in total who presented their results, where the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, dr.

Mieke de Droog together with the rector of the University of Aruba, dr. Viola Heutger opened the symposium. The students presented their results, where those present, including organizations who took part in the research, asked questions and exchanged opinions. The symposium was successful, with representatives from different organizations appreciating and applauding the work done by the students.

Finally, the students thanked the organizations that made this research possible: Stichting voor Verstandelijk Gehandicapten Aruba, Fania Planea Aruba, Formacion Social, Horacio Oduber Hospital Aruba, Aruba National Park Foundation, Scubbe Bubbels Foundation, Censo Aruba, Aruba Tourism Authority, Aruba Today and CEDE Aruba. A special thanks goes out to the team of the University of Aruba, Mieke de Droog, Nurianne Arias, Luc Alofs, Thaïs Franken and from the University of Utrecht, Professor Wieger Bakker and Drs. Nienke Kuitenbrouwer. □





# Landfill Parkietenbos closes

ORANJESTAD - On December 31, 2022, is the last day that the Parkietenbos Landfill is officially open to the public.

The majority of the population will not notice a change, since the company that collects waste remains the same and will collect the waste on the same day at the same time. The goal is eventually for everyone to sepa-



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Waste processing companies	
Type of waste	Company
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Tires	Ecotech or Carentra
Mixed waste (Home, Garden and others)	Ecotech

their own residential waste to the landfill there will be various new waste processing locations, based on the kind of waste.

In the blueprint of the Ministry of Nature, you will find detailed information on the

confirmed companies and what type of waste they accept.

It is essential to understand, that while the infrastructure of a circular economy, for recycling etc, is still not fully in place, there are enough basic solutions to close the Parkietenbos landfill. The dump site will be rehabilitated into park for solar energy .

There will be more options in the near future to take plastic, glass and other types of waste for recycling.



Moving from an open dump site to a sanitary landfill, where waste that are not reusable or recyclable is compacted and packed, is a considerable step for Aruba's environment.□

## GOODBYE 2022 & A TOAST TO 2023

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## Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!

**NOORD** - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from

10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass. Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can



place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! ☐



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## The Dabajuroid style

Etnia Nativa, through Island Insight, shares native cultural awareness, educates and safeguards Aruba's heritage, and encourages readers to experiment with an island keeper state of mind. Live and discover the true destination values behind our beaches. Discover more reasons to love Aruba through this native cultural blog.

In this episode, we will try to share our perspective regarding the native art of Aruba. Several series of ceramic designs have been discovered in the archaeological field. These one-of-a-kind decorations define an era as well as a cultural heritage identity. In Aruba, our Caquetian ancestors developed an original style classified as Dabajuroid by prehistory scholars, a name related to the nearby city of Dabajuro in the southwestern region of the Venezuelan state of Falcón.

The designs used in our Etnia Nativa gallery are based on geometric decorations and motifs in the Dabajuroid style. By understanding decoration as a communicative instrument, our designs and productions start from the moment we locate the right source, to extract the same raw earth material that would have generated the products according to the procedure of the ancestral inhabitants of the island, who used local clay for their ceramic vessels and ritual objects.

The Dabajuro style is among the most complex works in this region. The classic painted on designs were made in red, black or white, including various forms of incision, applications and stippling were also part of their pottery décor.

The larger pots demonstrate the mastery and excellence of the Dabajuro potters, as it is difficult to bake



such large pots in a simple open-air kiln. As soon as temperature differences develop within such kilns, large pots like these are prone to crack. The decorated pottery was finer and of superb quality. Two main decorating techniques have been applied: painted designs and applique modeling. The painted parts are mostly darker compared to the background color or lighter color of the boat. Colors such as brown, reddish brown, red, and black were used. The other decoration technique is modeling. From simple motifs like wavy edges and extra application rings around the edge of the vessel, more complex works like interpreting stylized animal heads like frogs, bats, birds, and turtles were created.

The clay works in our peculiar and unique museum reflect our energy in a mystical silence. Every shape and detail printed on what we create says something about who we are and what we represent as a cultural entity. Working with clay is a work of self-knowledge where creativity arises through emotion and fluidity. Etnia Nativa treats raw clay in the traditional indigenous way. We identify the best material by looking for raw clay. For this, we distinguish high-quality clay from the rest of the soil.



## EpisodeCLXXXVII186

Then, by adding water, we purify the material, thus contributing to the cleaning process. During this stage, the clay is purified, detoxified, and dehydrated to the point where it is ready to be molded into the desired shapes.

Consider tracing cultural and social transformations through works that incorporate all four major elements: earth, wind, fire, and water—a method that connects us with our ancestral origins through this simple and abundant material called clay, a billion-year-old material that gives our planet its name.

Every handmade piece is a unique ceramic design, pride it owner. For Etnia Nativa working with clay teaches us to be calm and relaxed in order to focus in to ourselves.

Now if you have been touched by our island's life and you're intrigued by its origins and cultural heritage, we encourage you to do something different outside the tourist grid. Become one of the exclusive visitors to the Etnia Nativa Experience, a private residential setting where you will be able to touch and be touched by an authentic Aruban assemblage of native art, archaic as well as archaeological artifacts, lithic tools, colonial furniture, and other collections. Get connected inside a recycled environment full of peace and relaxation, knowledge, information, and a grounded lifestyle.

Anthony, our acclaimed columnist, local artist, and island expert, has lived on Etnia Nativa since 1994, and he guides and lectures his guests through his resplendent home. The sole place to recreate and be introduced to an authentic glimpse into native Aruba. Something completely different for a change—a contemporary Native Aruba experience! An appointment is required. + 297 592 2702 or [etnianativa03@gmail.com](mailto:etnianativa03@gmail.com)



## Important information regarding fireworks

**ORANJESTAD** – We are already at the end of another year, and with the year-end come the selling of fireworks. Yesterday, 27th of December marked the official start to the selling of fireworks. This year once again the Police Department of Aruba (KPA) together with other organizations will be carrying out checks on establishments selling fireworks.

In a video published by the Police Department, spokesperson Liliana Rasmijn explains all rules and requirements with which those selling the fireworks need to comply during this season. Rasmijn explained in the video that the days on which it is allowed to sell fireworks is from the 27th until the 31st of December. During these days, authorities will be carrying out checks. Selling is allowed from sunrise until 9pm.

Rasmijn added that if police comes by outside of the stipulated hours and the place is open, the owner of the establishment will receive a warning; and if it happens again that the establishment is not respecting the rules, the police will cancel their firework permit right away. She also reminded the community that it is forbidden for any establishment to sell fireworks to children under 12 years of age if they are not accompanied by an adult. She added that those working in the container selling fireworks need to be 16 years old or older.

There are special, important rules for those selling fireworks. Rasmijn emphasized that all those who receive a permit to sell fireworks need to make sure to have a fire extinguisher, which is a requirement from the Department of Technical Inspections (DTI) and the Fire Department. They have to make sure to have an EHBO kit in the establishment in case of accidents, and have to ensure the container is always clean.

She pointed out that it is absolutely forbidden to sell old fireworks. She explained that police will control the date of sale for the previous year, namely 2021, and this year. Those are the dates



that are allowed to be on the products being sold.

Rasmijn also pointed out that the departments in charge of control can come by once, but the next day they can come again. "Not because they checked on the first day it would mean they will not check the same place again. We can show up again. Also, if you receive a warning, we will come back to make sure if everything is fixed the way it should be", she added.

It is also important for citizens to be aware of some tips when buying and lighting fireworks. Be critical of the fireworks that you purchase. The fireworks should not be older than two years old, so check the date on it. Check each piece for damage, and if one firework has damage, it will not work as expected and can result in injury to a person.

It is important to know what each piece will do. Check the label for instructions, or if there is a message illustrating what the firework will do. If this is missing, ask the seller what it does in order to be aware of what to expect and prevent danger. It is very important to purchase appropriate fireworks for children. From a young age it is a tradition to light up fireworks, children grow up in this atmosphere, but it is important to teach them how to do this correctly and safely.

Children should be educated on the dangers of fireworks. Many times, they enjoy experimenting with fireworks, building "bombs" or playing war with each other. Children need to be educated on how to use fireworks responsibly and safely for themselves and those around them.

Always use a wick, preferably a long one. Do not light up fireworks using a cigarette, lighter or other objects.

It is very important that if a firework is not lighting up, or is not working when lit, to not go back to it and try to light it again. There are different speeds at which the fireworks are set off, some go off faster than other. Wait at least 30 minutes to make sure the fireworks are not going off. Never light up a piece of firework in your hand, as this can result in severe accidents resulting in the loss of fingers, hands and even eyes. Light up all fireworks on the ground.

And lastly but most importantly, do not throw fireworks at people, animals or cars. □





# CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 40 Took

1 Depicted steps

6 Fruit tree 41 Reactor

10 Bean-bearing parts

42 Car parts

tree

11 Viola's

cousin

12 Steer

clear of

13 Ham's

need

14 Tenant's

fee

15 Parking

attendants

16 Curry

on TV

17 Feeding-

time need

18 Nonsense

19 Library

fixture

22 Half of a

sextet

23 Gets older

26 Retracted

29 Fighting

32 Pool need

33 Sandy

color

34 Step

down

36 Solemn

act

37 Indistinct

38 Ship of

1492

39 Puts out

DOWN

1 Egyptian

amulet

2 Poor

person

3 First

woman

on the

Supreme

Court

4 Be patient

5 Silent

assent

6 Ring out

7 Tribal

leader

8 Successor

of 3-Down

9 Perch

11 Baltimore

lunch

15 By way of

17 Pins

20 Model

buy

21 Longtime

CIA rival

24 Corrode

25 Strew

27 Ump's

call

28 Massages

29 Show

uncer-

tainty

30 Texas

31 Un-

bending

35 Courage

36 Puerto —

38 Spot to jot

12-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

YIDJ AKIN'D XMNOD LKYMBC

JM YIDJ AKIN'D YIBCTICK.

IBO BKUJ AKIN'D XMNOD

IXIGJ IBMJEKN PMGRK.

— J.D. KYGMJ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TO ME EVERY HOUR

OF THE LIGHT AND DARK IS A MIRACLE, EVERY

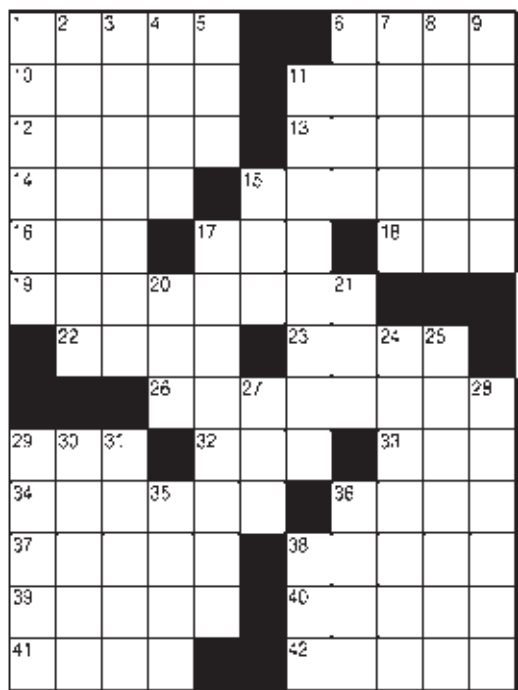
CUBIC INCH OF SPACE IS A MIRACLE. — WALT

WHITMAN

FOULS DEBIT  
RUPEE ARENA  
INSIDE TRACK  
ACE APE VIE  
RETIREES ETS  
DIE FRET  
FETES LASSO  
ARIA WON  
CAP SENSORS  
ESS KEG CHI  
OUTSIDE SHOT  
FREUD SCENE  
FERNS TIRES

Yesterday's answer

8 Successor 27 Ump's  
of 3-Down call  
9 Perch 28 Massages  
11 Baltimore 29 Show  
lunch uncer-  
15 By way of tainty  
17 Pins 30 Texas  
20 Model landmark  
buy 31 Un-  
21 Longtime bending  
CIA rival 35 Courage  
24 Corrode 36 Puerto —  
25 Strew 38 Spot to jot



12-28

AXYDLBAAXR  
IS LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three I's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-28

CRYPTOQUOTE

YIDJ AKIN'D XMNOD LKYMBC

JM YIDJ AKIN'D YIBCTICK.

IBO BKUJ AKIN'D XMNOD

IXIGJ IBMJEKN PMGRK.

— J.D. KYGMJ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TO ME EVERY HOUR OF THE LIGHT AND DARK IS A MIRACLE, EVERY CUBIC INCH OF SPACE IS A MIRACLE. — WALT WHITMAN

## Flight canceled? Experts share some advice about what to do

By DEE-ANN DURBIN  
AP Business Writer

Thousands of travelers were stranded at airports or stuck on hold trying to rebook flights this week as a massive storm snarled travel in the U.S. and Canada.

More than 2,800 more flights had already been canceled in the U.S. as of 7 a.m. Tuesday, according to the flight tracking service FlightAware, and problems are likely to continue at least into Wednesday. Staying calm and knowing your rights can go a long way if your flight is canceled, experts say. Here's some of their advice for dealing with a flight cancellation:

### MY FLIGHT WAS CANCELED. WHAT NEXT?

If you still want to get to your destination, most airlines will rebook you for free on the next available flight as long as it has seats, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

If you want to cancel the trip, you are entitled to a full refund, even if you bought non-refundable tickets. You're also entitled to a refund of any bag fees, seat upgrades or other extras.

Kurt Ebenhoch, a consumer travel advocate and former airline executive, stressed that travelers are eligible for a refund, not just vouchers for future travel. If you do take a voucher, make sure you inquire about blackout dates and other restrictions on its use.

### WILL I HAVE TO PAY A CHANGE FEE IF I REBOOK MY FLIGHTS?

Major airlines including

Delta, American, Southwest, Air Canada, Alaska, Frontier and Spirit are waiving change fees during the storm, which gives travelers more flexibility as they shift their plans.

But Ebenhoch said travel-

ers should read the fine print carefully.

If you book a return flight outside the window that the airline sets, you may have to pay for the difference in fares, for example. □

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# Jessica Henwick talks making it, diversity and Nicolas Cage

By KRYSTA FAURIA

Associated Press

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Just before Jessica Henwick was cast in “Game of Thrones” and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” the then-aspiring actor had already left Los Angeles for her hometown in England. “I ran out of money, so I went back and moved back in with my parents,” she recalled.

Although she hadn’t quite given up on acting, Henwick was struggling to find jobs in front of the camera. Before leaving LA, she did work as a crew member on sets — an experience she drew from for her role in Rian Johnson’s “Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery,” which debuts Friday on Netflix. In the whodunit film boasting a star-studded ensemble cast, Henwick plays Peg, the assistant and handler to model and sweatpants line founder Birdie (Kate Hudson). But her experience as a crew member was more than just a source of inspiration for her character — it was “hugely educational” for her as an actor, Henwick said. “To be on a set and listen to how the director communicated with the cast and with the crew and how it worked, it was hugely insightful,” she said.



Actor Jessica Henwick poses for a portrait to promote the film “Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery” on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Although her performance as Bugs in “The Matrix Resurrections” garnered critical praise, she still considers herself a “jobbing actor.” “I’m not just getting things handed to me,” she said, though she admits working with Keanu Reeves felt like a turning point in her career as well as a personal triumph. “I mean, what an icon. They just don’t make ‘em like that anymore. It’s kind of sad,” she said. Reflecting on her experi-

ence with Reeves, Henwick lamented the ways in which the Hollywood landscape has shifted. “He’s from an era where it meant something to be a star or an A-lister,” she said. “There are so many actors nowadays. I don’t know if it’s just diluted or maybe we’re overexposed with social media.” Henwick had always known the chances of her making it in Hollywood were slim, which she says informed her decision to drop out

of acting school after being cast as the lead in the BBC series “Spirit Warriors” in 2009. “Maybe I got too big for my boots. I don’t know. I just think that I realized you don’t have to do that,” she said when asked why she quit. “If I had continued going to that school, I would have been in debt.” She said she struggles with the issue of equity in acting given the high cost of training in England. “It’s definitely predisposed

towards people of privilege,” she said. “I know that we have some of the best teachers in the world, so I fully support how much schools charge, but it does mean that people from lower income families can’t afford to go.” Henwick, whose mother is Singaporean Chinese, was also mindful of the limited opportunities for people of color in England, which she said was one of the factors that prompted her initial move to Los Angeles. “England’s main export, in terms of entertainment, is period dramas. We do it better than anyone else in the world. Shakespeare, Austen. Even at the time, the biggest show was ‘Downton Abbey,’” she recalled. “I used to want to be in one of those so bad. The costumes, the language. It’s poetry.” When asked how to address that lack of representation, Henwick praised “Bridgerton” executive producer Shonda Rhimes for her ability to bring diversity to the genre. Henwick is looking forward to a more rooted and restful 2023 after years of traveling and big projects. But she said, if she has her pick in the future, she hopes to work with Nicolas Cage one day. □

## Editions of Jan. 6 report already on Amazon best seller list

**NEW YORK (AP)** — It took less than a day for the Jan. 6 report to go from public unveiling to the bestseller



A video of former President Donald Trump is shown on a screen, as the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds its final meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, Dec. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

list on Amazon.com. By late Friday, three editions of the Congressional probe of the 2021 siege of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump were in the top 30 on Amazon. The editions include one with a foreword by MSNBC anchor Ari Melber, published by Harper Paperbacks; A Cella Books release with a foreword by New Yorker editor David Remnick and an epilogue by Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Maryland Democrat and member of the House Select Committee; and a volume by the Hachette Book Group imprint Twelve, published in coordination with The New York

Times. The 814-page document, released late Thursday, is not copyrighted, can be published by anyone and is otherwise available for free on various government and media web sites. Previous government publications, from the Sept. 11 commission report to Robert Mueller’s probe into Trump’s ties to Russian officials when he ran for president in 2016, have been bestsellers. The Sept. 11 report was even a finalist in 2004 for the National Book Award. As with other government releases, publishers have rushed to get their books out quickly to capitalize on public interest. All three

bestselling editions will be out within the next two weeks, along with books from Random House and Melville House Books. The Jan. 6 report culminates an 18-month investigation, which included more than 1,000 witness interviews and more than a million pages of source material. The committee of seven Democrats and two Republicans blamed the insurrection on Trump, finding a “multi-part conspiracy” orchestrated by the president and his closest allies in an effort to overturn his loss to Democrat Joe Biden. Trump, a Republican, has already announced his candidacy for 2024. □



# Shiffrin takes win No. 78 with 1st GS victory in 2022

**SEMMERING, Austria (AP)**

— Mikaela Shiffrin had to overcome a lot of pressure Tuesday to end her one-year drought in women's World Cup giant slaloms.

And not all the pressure on the American was coming from her rivals.

Holding a big advantage of 0.72 seconds, Shiffrin found it hard to focus on her last run. Standing in the start house on top of the Panorama course, the race leader could hear exactly how well her competitors were doing.

"You can hear the (finish area) announcer on the top, she's announcing in English, so it's really getting into my head," Shiffrin said after the race.

After she heard the announcer enthusiastically call new best times for Marta Bassino and then for Petra Vlhová, Shiffrin tried to tell herself: "Just ignore it!" She knew she had to push hard all the way and did just that. Shiffrin lost nearly six-tenths of her advantage but ultimately beat Vlhová by 0.13 seconds, the American's first triumph in the discipline in more than a year. "It's quite loud at the start, there is a lot of distraction.



The winner United States' Mikaela Shiffrin celebrates after completing an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom, in Semmering, Austria, Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022.

Associated Press

And I was starting to get really nervous, so I just tried to push. These other women pushed so hard on the second run, they almost caught up all the way," Shiffrin said. The result marked Shiffrin's fourth World Cup win of the season and 78th overall, leaving her four short of the women's record set by her former teammate Lindsey Vonn.

Bassino, who won the previous GS and remains in

the lead of the discipline standings, was 0.31 behind in third. France's Tessa Worley, who was third after the opening run, dropped to fourth, and Olympic GS champion Sara Hector of Sweden trailed by 1.52 in eighth.

It was the 15th GS win in total for Shiffrin, who was the 2018 Olympic champion, but the first since triumphing in Courchevel, France, in December 2021. She

had just one podium result from the seven previous giant slaloms in the calendar year 2022. "Very special," Shiffrin said about ending the drought. "GS is one of the hardest events for me, but also, when I'm skiing well, then it's just amazing." The race was a replacement for the season-opening giant slalom that was canceled in another Austrian resort, Sölden, in October, and is the first in a

three-day series, followed by another GS on Wednesday and a night slalom the next day.

"The start of (an event) with three races is always a bit nerve-racking. You hope that you are on the right shape, that you can bring intensity to the start," Shiffrin said.

Shiffrin won all three events when Semmering last hosted races on three consecutive days in December 2016 and she was on her way to the first of her four overall World Cup titles.

Tuesday's race was also the first in a series of eight technical events in Austria, Croatia, and Slovenia.

"It's important to start this block with good skiing, with a good mindset, a good mentality, and the right motivation," Shiffrin said.

"I feel I'm there, so no matter what happens the next two days, it's a really, really good place to start this block."

Sofia Goggia, the Italian speed specialist who is runner-up to Shiffrin in the overall standings, does not compete at Semmering, enabling the American to extend her lead to 205 points. □

# Dolphins QB Tua Tagovailoa in concussion protocol again

**By ALANIS THAMES**

**AP Sports Writer**

**MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP)**

— Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa has returned to the NFL's concussion protocol, Miami coach Mike McDaniel said Monday.

Tagovailoa was experiencing symptoms when he met with team doctors Monday, though McDaniel said it is unclear if Tagovailoa was concussed in Sunday's 26-20 loss to Green Bay.

Tagovailoa appeared to bang his head on the ground when he was tackled in the second quarter against the Packers, but he never left the game and was not evaluated for a concussion.

"As far as the game was concerned, no one recog-

nized anything with regard to any sort of hit. I can't really tell you exactly what it was," McDaniel said, adding that he got the news Monday afternoon.

The concussion protocol is enacted whenever a player reports concussion-related symptoms, even if he isn't certain to have a concussion.

There is no set timetable for exiting the protocol, so Tagovailoa could potentially play in Sunday's pivotal game at New England if he advances through the NFL's five-step process and is cleared.

Teddy Bridgewater will practice this week with the first team, but McDaniel said it is too early to name a starter for Week 17.

"That's one of the reasons

you go and aggressively pursue a player like Teddy Bridgewater," McDaniel said. If Tagovailoa did suffer a concussion, it would be his second this season. He entered the concussion protocol after taking a scary hit that knocked him unconscious during Miami's Sept. 29 game at Cincinnati. He was stretchered off the field and returned in Week 7. Tagovailoa took another hard hit four days before the Cincinnati game during a win over Buffalo. He appeared to show concussion symptoms but was evaluated and stayed in the game. The NFL later changed its concussion protocol to mandate that any player who shows possible concussion symptoms including a lack of balance

or stability sit out the remainder of a game.

The injury comes at a challenging time for Miami (8-7), which has lost four straight to fall to the bottom of the AFC playoff field.

"This is something that we have all of our fortunes ahead of us," McDaniel said, "so it's up to us to choose what we do with all the past experiences, move on to the next game." □



Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa (1) looks to pass during the first half of an NFL football game against the Green Bay Packers, Sunday, Dec. 25, 2022, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press



# Women's sports saw pivotal growth in deals, interest in 2022

By **ALANIS THAMES**  
AP Sports Writer

South Carolina coach Dawn Staley has been around women's basketball long enough to see the growing pains of a young WNBA league gradually shifting to increased interest in the sport at all levels. "We probably are bursting at the seams for the people that are decision-makers in our game to allow us to be just that," said Staley, who led the Gamecocks to their second women's hoops title this year. Popularity across women's sports has grown steadily over the past few years, but 2022 marked a pivotal moment as several sports saw increases in viewership and ratings, sponsorship deals and prime-time coverage. This past WNBA regular season was the most watched since 2006. And storylines were plentiful as the league contended with the detainment of Phoenix Mercury center and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner and the retirement of one of the league's most popular players in Seattle Storm point guard Sue Bird. According to ESPN, which aired 25 regular-season games and the entire post-season, the 2022 playoffs averaged 456,000 viewers up 22% over 2021's post-season making it the most-viewed WNBA postseason



South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley celebrates after a college basketball game in the final round of the Women's Final Four NCAA tournament against UConn, April 3, 2022, in Minneapolis. South Carolina won 64-49 to win the championship.

since 2007. The WNBA draft averaged 403,000 viewers, which was the most since Diana Taurasi was the top pick in 2004. WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert said her league and the women's college game build off each other. Engelbert said the NCAA Women's Tournament, which had the most viewed championship game in nearly two decades, built momentum for the women's game heading into the WNBA season. Now she wants to see how far that growth can go.

"I'm never satisfied," Engelbert said. "My team is like 'Ask for more.' When you're in hyper growth mode that's how you have to do it. We don't rest. We have to take advantage of the momentum when you have it. ... You have to keep pushing, too. "We're underinvested and undervalued." The league has a deal with ESPN/ABC through 2025 where the company paid the WNBA \$27 million in 2021 and \$28.5 million this past season. That number goes up \$1.5 million per

season until it hits \$33 million in 2025. At the collegiate level, division I football players continue to exponentially out-earn athletes in all other sports. But name, image and likeness (NIL) deals have been a game changer for female collegiate athletes, particular in non-revenue producing sports. NIL allows women to take advantage of large social media followings and earn sponsorships with brands like Champs and Adidas. Olivia Dunne, a gymnast at LSU, has over 8 million fol-

lowers across all of her social media platforms, more than any other female collegiate athlete. Her sponsorships include deals with the clothing brand Vuori and American Eagle. From the July 2021 inception of NIL through November, women's sports occupied six of the top 10 highest-earning sports by NIL compensation, according to the NIL technology and marketing company Opendorse. "The student-athletes are using social media to build their own audiences, which is driving more interest and tune in to their sports," said Blake Lawrence, CEO at Opendorse. "The industry is feeding itself ... the more marketable the women's sports athletes, the more engaged their audience will be, the more engaged the audience will be, the more marketable the athletes become." Women's soccer has also enjoyed a boost in 2022. In an October report, the organization found that clubs reported year-on-year commercial revenue growth of 33% indicating growing interest from sponsors; 77% of leagues had a title sponsor in 2021, up from 66% the previous year. That structural growth was coupled with unprecedented overall interest in the game. □

## Novak Djokovic back in Australia a year after deportation



Serbia's Novak Djokovic of Falcons, serves to Austria's Sebastian Ofner of Kites, during a match of the World Tennis League at Coca-Cola Arena, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, Dec. 23, 2022.

Associated Press

**SYDNEY (AP)** — Novak Djokovic has arrived in Australia almost a year after he was deported over his stance against COVID-19 vaccination, Tennis Australia confirmed Wednesday. Djokovic will open his 2023 campaign in Adelaide as he prepares for a shot at a 10th Australian Open title. The 21-time major winner has been granted a visa by the Australian government and is listed to play at the Adelaide International, which starts Sunday. The 35-year-old Serb arrived in Adelaide on Tuesday night, the governing body confirmed.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley indicated at a news conference Tuesday that Djokovic had arrived. "Novak is welcome in Australia," Tiley said. "I think as we speak he has landed in Adelaide and he's going to be the player to beat (at the Australian Open) again." The Australian Open runs from Jan. 16-29 in Melbourne. Djokovic missed the Grand Slam last year because of his refusal to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Australia has since lifted strict rules for unvaccinated travelers.

Immigration Minister Andrew Giles last month confirmed that Djokovic, who had been facing a possible three-year ban after being deported, was granted a visa. Djokovic has won the Australian Open a record nine times, including the last three times he played. Rafael Nadal won the 2022 title in Djokovic's absence. Questions remain around how Djokovic will be received by Australian fans this year. Tiley told reporters Tuesday he believed Djokovic will be well-received. □